Making a Meal of It
Lesson plan 5: Unpacking the supermarket bag

Age group: 7 - 11

Aims:
To demonstrate the global diversity of the origins of the food on our supermarket shelves.
To encourage awareness that many of the poorer countries of the world are contributing
wards towards feeding us.

What to do:
You will need:
• Card, paper, string, scissors, drawing pins, pens.
• A large piece of material or tablecloth for each group.
• Photocopies of the worksheet: The world in a supermarket bag (below)– enough for
one for each group.
• An enlarged photocopy of a world map (below). You may wish to buy a full-colour
poster version of this a Peters Projection world map to use as a focus for this topic
which can be found in Oxfam’s Catalogue for Schools.

Supermarket carrier bags for each group, containing four to seven items of food including:
• pulses/grains;
• tinned fish/fruit;
• coffee/tea;
• a packaged/processed foodstuff;
• a bar of chocolate.

Try to make this collection from as wide a variety of countries of origin as you can and include
healthy/less healthy items and cheap/less cheap items. Ensure that every item is labelled
with its price. (As many foods are now labelled only by bar-code you may have to label the
foodstuffs yourself.) Also make sure that the students are able to work out where the product
comes from, from the label, country of origin tag, or your own labelling.

The foods contained in the ‘supermarket bags’ could subsequently be used in a harvest
festival collection or grocery stall at a school fair.

Divide the class into groups of four. Give each group a photocopied worksheet, pens, and
small blank cards to label the food for display. Ask each group to unpack their bag, record on
their worksheet the name of each food in the bag, how it is packaged, the country it comes
from, the brand name, and its price.
They should then write out labels to show the country of origin of each item and display their items on the cloth. Each group should then present their foods to the rest of the class.

Finally, help each group to find the countries from which their foodstuffs originated on the world map. Countries should be marked with a drawing pin and linked by string to the children's labels of their foodstuffs. Bring the whole class together for reflection on the session and to look at the range of countries from which the food in their bags has come.

**Discussion points:**

Points for discussion could include:

- How many of the countries are in the South?
- Why are many of our foodstuffs grown or produced in the South? (One reason is that climate allows production of fruit and vegetables for most of the year.)
- Which continents are in the South? (Africa, Asia, Latin America.) Which foodstuffs in the supermarket bags come from which continents? (You may have rice from India, tinned fish from Indonesia, and fruit from Malaysia. Does the class know that these countries are all in Asia?)

When talking about the countries of the South try to convey the idea that they tend to be poorer than the countries of the North but that there are poor and rich people in both North and South.

**Fair Trade:**

There is also now a growing demand by consumers for fairly-traded products, including food products. More and more people want to know that the tea or coffee or honey or sugar which they buy has been produced without exploitation, and that the farmers who grew or processed the product in the South received a fair price for their work.

> 'Why do I sell my cocoa to fair trade organisations? Because they are honest and fair and do not try to cheat us. They give me a good price and pay me straight away. They also share what they make with us and every year the farmers earn a bonus. So now we are better off and can afford to spend a little more on the children’s school fees and other basic things.'
> Akasuwa, a Ghanaian cocoa farmer

**What is a fairly-traded product?**

Oxfam Fair Trade Company uses the following criteria to check it is buying fairly traded foodstuffs. The producers of fair-trade products should:

- receive fair wages;
- be able to meet to discuss important issues;
- not be discriminated against or exploited;
- enjoy reasonable working conditions;
- take care of the environment.
### Curriculum links:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>England</th>
<th>Scotland</th>
<th>Wales</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Geography:  
- Use atlases and globes; collect and record evidence; to recognise how places fit within a wider geographical context and are interdependent.  
English:  
- Group discussion and interaction; scan texts for information; draw on different features of texts to obtain meaning. | Environmental Studies, Social subjects:  
- People and Place - location and features of maps.  
- Developing informed attitudes - the importance of interdependence in a local and global context.  
English:  
- Listening in groups.  
- Talking in groups.  
- Reading for information. | Geography:  
- Use atlases and globes; collect and record evidence; to recognise how places fit within a wider geographical context and are interdependent.  
English:  
- Group discussion and interaction; scan texts for information; draw on different features of texts to obtain meaning. |
## Making a Meal of It
### Worksheet: The world in a supermarket bag

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Food</th>
<th>How packaged</th>
<th>Where from</th>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Making a Meal of It
Handout: Peters projection map

World map: Peters projection

Taken from Go Bananas! (Oxfam 2000)